

Waste Discharge to Land

Photo: Rio Alto ponds

Overview

The Waste Discharge to Land Program regulates discharges of waste that may affect the quality of surface and ground waters of the state. The Program includes staff from three offices: Redding, Sacramento, and Fresno. This Program is the oldest state water quality control program, and covers a wide variety of discharges. In the Central Valley, the Program primarily regulates wastewater (sewage) treatment facilities, food processing industries (including wineries), wastewater recycling, sand and gravel mines, and other industries that discharge non-hazardous wastes. A staff of 23 full-time positions currently regulates over 1,400 facilities in the Central Valley.

To implement this Program, Board staff review permit applications submitted by dischargers (referred to as Reports of Waste Discharge, or ROWDs), and draft permits for the discharges (referred to as Waste Discharge Requirements, or WDRs.) Any discharger proposing to discharge waste that may result in pollution must first receive WDRs prescribed by the Board before the discharge may occur. The WDRs include conditions and provisions that establish requirements that a discharger must meet. These include numeric and/or narrative effluent and receiving water limits to protect beneficial uses of the receiving waters, prohibitions of discharge, and monitoring and reporting requirements. WDRs must fully comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies, such as the State Anti-degradation Policy. After the WDRs have been drafted and circulated for public comment, Board staff presents the WDRs to the Board for adoption. In addition to permit writing, staff reviews reports, monitoring data, and other materials submitted by the discharger in compliance with their WDRs. Staff also periodically review existing WDRs and update them as necessary. Compliance and enforcement staff monitor the dischargers' compliance with their WDRs, conduct periodic inspections, and issue enforcement orders when needed.

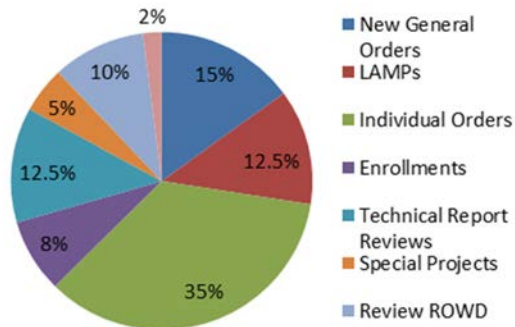
Sometimes WDRs are written for the specific discharger (individual WDRs), and sometimes WDRs are written to regulate a similar group of dischargers (general WDRs). Currently, there are around 1,040 dischargers regulated by individual WDRs, and 390 dischargers regulated by general WDRs. The Program is also charged with developing and overseeing conditional waivers, which may be used to regulate those discharges that have the lowest threat to water quality. Conditional waivers must be reviewed once every five years so that the Board may continuously evaluate whether regulating a discharger under a waiver is appropriate. Some discharges generally fit within the category of waste discharge to land, but are large enough to merit programs of their own. See the program fact sheet for the Land Disposal (facilities requiring full containment of the waste), Confined Animal Facilities, Irrigated Lands and Oil Fields Programs.

In addition to the WDR workload, this Program is also responsible for implementing the state-wide Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Policy. This includes reviewing local area management plans (LAMPS) for implementation by local counties.

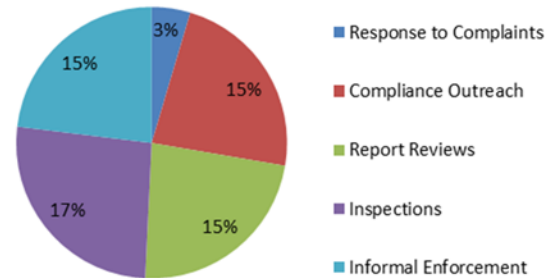
Goals

The primary goal of the program is to protect the quality of ground and surface waters from unreasonable degradation and to prevent pollution and nuisance conditions like odors or flies. Program achieves this goal through timely processing of applications for new or revised WDRs, updating existing WDRs to assure they stay current, and implementing timely enforcement where necessary.

Permitting Staff Activities



Compliance-Enforcement Staff Activities



Summary of Special Projects in Fiscal Year 2015-2016

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems Policy: The region reviewed 16 Local Agency Management Programs (LAMPs) from responsible agencies, 53% of submittals within the Central Valley jurisdiction. The Regional Board approved LAMPs for 2 Local Agencies. Staff worked with Local Agencies and State Board on related pending requirements for Annual and Water Quality Assessment Reports.

Lean 6-sigma program: The region completed training of the Lean 6-sigma program, with the intent of implementing the program to minimize the time spent on preparing WDRs. A goal of a 75% reduction in the time it takes to process permits was established. For the first year of implementing the Lean 6-sigma techniques, Staff has observed a 65% reduction in this time it takes to process permits.

State-Wide General WDRs: Regional Water board staff worked with State Water Board staff in development of state-wide general WDRs for use in the Central Valley.

Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Performance

Permitting Staff

	Redding		Sacramento		Fresno	
	Target	Completed	Target	Completed	Target	Completed
Individual WDRs	2	2	9	8	16	14
General WDRs/Waiver Enrollments	24	20	62	40	40	14
Pre-Permit Inspections	2	2	9	8	16	11

The region did not meet the target for General WDRs/Waiver enrollments due to vacancies of permitting staff positions and staff time spent on reviewing LAMPs.

Compliance and Enforcement Staff

	Redding		Sacramento		Fresno	
	Target	Completed	Target	Completed	Target	Completed
Inspections	32	60	56	58	136	64

The target number for Fresno included oil field inspections that had previously been accounted for in this metric. Oil field inspections are now being accounted for in the Oil Field Unit.

Compliance and Enforcement staff also focused on ensuring compliance with recently adopted enforcement actions and permits for all three offices in the Central Valley Region.